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INTRODUCTORY LECTURE,

COMPRISING THE

PRINCIPLES OF OBSTETRICS

AND THE

DISEASES OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN,

AS TAUGHT IN THE

*Homœopathic Medical College of Pennsylvania,*

By Prof. H. N. GUERNSEY.



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## INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

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GENTLEMEN :

The principles of Homœopathy embrace the whole truth of the medical world, and their investigation and practice afford the greatest scope for the development and application of the mental and moral powers. Vast as is the domain of learning, and extraordinary as is the progress which has been made in all branches of science, we can safely say of Homœopathy, as of all the rest, that the wonderful discoveries already made, bear but a small proportion to those which will hereafter be brought to light. And, as in all other things belonging to human improvement, so in Homœopathy, there is ample room and scope of investigation to satisfy the most eager thirst for knowledge, and diversity enough to suit every variety of taste, order of intellect and degree of qualification. For the peaceful conquests of the mind, there is an unknown world, other than that for which Alexander wept, hidden as yet behind the veil with which nature covers her secret mysteries, but stretching all along

the confines and into the very heart of the kingdom of knowledge, and sometimes nearest to the earnest seeker, when least suspected.

The science of Homœopathy offers yet many a field which the foot has not pressed nor the eye beheld, but of which the mind in its deeper and more excursive musings will sometimes catch a glimpse, which will bring to it a gleam of light from Hesperian Islands, a fresh and fragrant breeze from an unseen land, Sabean odors from a spicy shore, in after times and by happier voyages to be approached, explored and inhabited.

How many have felt, at times, when the world around them was wrapped in slumber, and when with all their soul in their eyes they gazed into the star-lit depths of the midnight heavens, and lost themselves in contemplation of the worlds and systems of worlds that sweep through the immensity of space,—how many have felt that even all that veiled mystery must one day yield and open itself to the ardent, unwearied, imploring research of patient science. How many have felt, in those choice and blessed moments, in which the world and its interests are forgotten, and the spirit retires into the inner sanctuary of meditation; when losing consciousness of self, and dwelling only on the infinite perfection of which human life is to be the earthly image, and kindling the flame of thought on the altar of prayer,—how many have felt in such moments, that it must at last be given to man to fathom the secret of the fearful and wonderful making of his own being, and to have solved for him the mighty problem of the Divine Providence, in his creation, preservation and ultimate destiny.

Gentlemen: I am not in a land of dreams. I am fully awake to the actualities of the material world, fully conscious of the impressions which come to me through my natural senses. The mental or spiritual worlds of human affection and thought, actually lie within the material world, do in fact constitute its life. So that in the effort to adapt our medical science to the great use of removing the physical ills of

human existence, we must deal with metaphysics as well as with physics. Indeed, the physician's work has but fairly begun, when he has placed his foot upon the last round of the ladder of physical science. If he be a physician in very truth, he must go onward and upward, *onward and upward*; and the more he perfects himself in the knowledge and practical recognition of the laws of metaphysics, and brings them into harmony and coöperative action with the laws of physics, the brighter and more beautiful and glorious will be the crown of success which shall rest upon his labors. Not only do we make the lame to walk, the deaf to hear and the blind to see, but we treat successfully the most abject cases of insanity, actually cast out, as it were, the grievously tormenting spirits, and present again upon the great theatre of life, sane minds in sound bodies; not to exalt, but to humble and encourage us, by such evidence of our instrumentality in the operation of higher laws, and in the development of principles and powers lying above and beyond the physical world.

In this Institution, Gentlemen, as in all the Medical Institutions of our country, the professional course of study embraces seven distinctive branches of science: Anatomy, Physiology, Surgery, *Materia Medica*, Chemistry, Therapeutics and Obstetrics. There has prevailed a very general, but to my mind, a very grievous error, to the effect that it is needless to include all these branches in the course of study pursued in a Homœopathic Institution, that the student should visit the Allopathic schools in pursuit of knowledge of the several branches mentioned, and Homœopathy be made a special study at the end of the course. As if Homœopathy were a mere appendage to Allopathy.

Not so! The principle of Homœopathy should be made the very basis and ground work of all medical education. And not only should Homœopathy be made the basis and ground work, but it must also constitute the very essence of the whole course of study, pervading it as a living principle, permeating its every form, intertwining itself with all its modes and facts; thus replete with life, it may be to all

branches of science like a golden chain which, descending from the Olympic Jove, unites all the parts of the universe into one, and subjects them all, so united, to his rule and law.

To become a successful physician, at this day, it is necessary that the student should prosecute his studies in an institution which makes the Homœopathic principle its acknowledged basis, and leaves its unmistakable impress upon every department of professional knowledge. Under such circumstances only can it be expected that the mind will become fully imbued with all the minutiae of our science. Under such circumstances only, untrammeled by false and fallacious doctrines put forth by the Old School, and guided by the clear light of facts gathered and protected beneath the banner of Homœopathy, can the mind attain rational freedom of action, and move through the immense fields of the still unexplored regions of knowledge, in pursuit of new discoveries and new means of healing power.

Gentlemen, it is my purpose, and it shall be my endeavor, as, I am confident it is the purpose and will be the endeavor of each of my colleagues, to introduce into my course of lectures all the latest discoveries and improvements in my department; and to give you, with these, all that I may have been enabled to gather in addition, from my own personal observation and experience. Every faithful and honest practitioner has opportunities of his own to observe, compare and eliminate new truths from the existing conditions which come under his eye. And if I speak of myself, in this connection, it is not to elevate myself in comparison with others, since they can doubtless say as much or more, but to elicit your confidence in my teachings, as based upon actual experience as well as upon careful study. Since I have been in the practice of Homœopathy, I have had placed in my hands nearly three thousand cases of obstetrics. Out of this number, I have lost but three mothers; one from puerperal convulsions; one from gradual sinking, owing to nervous exhaustion and one from rupture of the vagina, the child being

expelled too suddenly, and before I arrived to render any assistance in the labor. With the above exceptions all accidents, such as puerperal fever, convulsions, hemorrhages &c., have yielded readily to the Homœopathic remedies, without any resort whatever to the usual Allopathic measures. All hemorrhages of the uterus, in cases of abortion or from other causes, have been controlled without the use of the tampon, the cold douche, or any other means save the specific remedy. I neither advocate nor employ topical applications in prolapsus uteri, leucorrhœa, ulceration of the neck of the uterus, etc.; and the success I have met with in the treatment of such cases, fully justifies my reliance upon the remedies Homœopathically indicated in each particular case. In managing cases of *placenta prævia*, which are so brutally and fatally maltreated by most accoucheurs, what method can be more desirable in its nature and results, than one of my own by which not a particle of pain is inflicted upon the already, suffering patient, the frightful hemorrhage being controlled at once, and both mother and child invariably saved.

Gentlemen! permit me to say, for the sake of our cause, that in the treatment of diseases peculiar to women and children, during the course of an extensive practice, covering a period of nearly twenty years, I have never found it necessary to deviate from the principle, "*similia similibus*." In full reliance upon the actual power, developed by a right application of this principle, you can freely meet every form of disease, and hope to conquer, if human means are to be of any avail in prolonging human life.

While expounding to you the scientific principles and methods peculiar to the branch of obstetrics, I shall be able to draw largely upon actual experience in the illustrations which I shall present to you. And it will be my aim to impart to you as great an amount of practical knowledge, as it may be possible for me to give you; upon which you may rely with *certainty*, and which may be rendered immediately available. And, in order to show you that Homœopathy is not a mere pellet of science, but a *great practical system*, I

will pass in review some of the advantages which accrue to the obstetrician from basing his scientific knowledge and practice upon the law, "Simila similibus curantur."

The celebrated Tyler Smith, of London, says: "The obstetric art has for its principal aim, the study of the act of parturition itself, of all that relates to the prevention or alleviation of the pangs and dangers in which women bring forth children, and of the preservation of their offspring."

Our Homœopathic experience has demonstrated most fully, that we *can* do much, *very* much, to facilitate the act of parturition, to relieve the pangs of labor, to lessen its dangers, and to preserve the offspring. Are the labor-like pains false or premature, or does abortion threaten to destroy the product of conception, it is in our power, by the administration of the right remedy, to correct the evil, and to allow pregnancy to continue to the full period of gestation, when it will terminate in a less painful delivery, and with almost certain assurance of safety to the life of the child.

Are the labor-pains distressingly severe, we ameliorate them. Are they spasmotic, we render them natural. Are they too weak or flagging, we give them vigor and force. Should they cease, and danger threaten and death impend over mother or child from that cause, we have it in our power to restore them again, and thus to remove all danger. Indeed, it is no more than the truth, to say, that all the conceivable difficulties to which the parturient female is liable, save those arising from mechanical obstruction, may be set aside with greater or less ease by the administration of the proper Homœopathic remedies.

It is a subject of general remark among women, who have had both Allopathic and Homœopathic treatment during the entire period of pregnancy and lying in, that their sufferings are much less, that they get well sooner, and with far less loss of strength, under the latter, than under the former. Surely this testimony is invaluable. Again, under Allopathic hands, some women always give birth to scrawny, ill-shapen, unhealthy children; which are raised with much

difficulty, if at all; but which, in many instances, are relieved by death from a miserable existence, even before the first dentition has been fully accomplished. Under Homoeopathic care, when exercised from the beginning of pregnancy, these same women have become the happy mothers of plump, well-formed and healthy children, raised with little or no difficulty, and cutting their teeth with comparative ease. Their growth and development are natural and orderly, and when compared with those who have survived the treatment of the Old School, they do not appear like children of the same family.

Still further,—we find a class of women, whose children at the full period of utero-gestation are always presented for delivery in an unnatural position. In some the face presents, in others a shoulder, in others the breech, and in others no two presentations are alike. Now, gentlemen, the position and presentation of the child at term is solely due, in all cases where accidental causes do not intervene, to the reflex action of the vital state of the mother upon the offspring, during the entire period of pregnancy. The foetus in utero has no will of its own; it has not even instinct; nor are its motions spontaneous. It moves only as it is moved; it moves, as it lives and has its being, from the mother alone. It is subjected entirely to the source of its natural existence and subsistence. As Dr. Simpson expresses it: the motions of the foetus are entirely excito-motory. It is not difficult, therefore, to understand why we have such a variety of mal-presentations recorded in the works of Old School practitioners. A certain disorderly state of the pregnant female will be sure to produce a corresponding abnormal position or presentation of the child, if it be allowed to continue until the full term is accomplished. The whole life of the mother, mental and physical, enters into and forms the whole life of the child. As the one moves, so moves the other; as the one turns, so turns the other. Nay, the life of the foetus is as much a part of the life of the mother, as is the vitality of any other portion of her body. It is as much a part of the

mother's life, as was the seed, from which it was conceived, a part of the father's life. And even as the latter derives its whole quality, and form, and peculiar effect from the quality of its origin and source, so do the ovary and the products of the ovary obtain their entire quality, form and ultimate appearance and presentation from the living cause of their existence. There is no escape from the logic of the simple law of cause and effect. And, therefore, I maintain that if we prescribe according to the symptoms manifested by an existing cause, all the effects flowing therefrom will cease; and that in the cases under consideration, in succeeding accouchments, we shall have the most favorable positions as well as presentations.

This, gentlemen, has been my experience, and it has been the experience of others, eminent in the profession. Upon the ground of reason, then, confirmed by experience, I confidently assert, that no child at term need be presented abnormally, if it remains free from the interference of accidental causes. Again, where Homœopathy is truly represented, from birth to maturity, and throughout the life of the female, it affords the means of preventing the formation of those frightful pelvic deformities, which so often fill with horror the chamber of the lying-in-patient. Homœopathic treatment, through life, may obviate these difficulties and dangers, and many more. It may prevent the formation of osseous growths,—fibrous, ovarian, and fatty tumors, and all those morbid productions which cause mechanical obstruction to parturition. It may also prevent those frightful hemorrhages, of which we read and hear so much from the Allopathic profession. Most of these hemorrhages are the result of constitutional derangements, which a specific mode of treatment will certainly cure. Retention of the placenta,—either by adhesion, or by abnormal uterine contraction, such as the hour-glass contraction, &c.,—puerperal convulsions, and all such pathological attendants upon a purely physiological function, may be prevented by timely treatment according to the law, "*similia similibus.*" Barrenness, and the failure of

well-formed children at the full term,—of which we find so many sad examples in the Allopathic records,—are disorders equally amenable to our law.

Nor is this all. Spontaneous ovulation, which is the cause of menstruation, is effected in healthy women without suffering; and signifies that they are living in the perfection of womanly development; while the different forms of amenorrhœa, dysmenorrhœa and menorrhagia, so common to the human female, do but image forth just so many abnormal states which respectively arise in consequence of some particular constitutional defect. Even in the most distressing of these cases, health and vigor may be restored by the proper Homœopathic treatment, and spontaneous ovulation rendered at once normal and painless.

Again,—women who are healthy, and mentally and physically in harmony with the pregnant state, do not suffer during any portion of the term of utero-gestation. For when undisturbed by disorder of any kind, this is a natural, purely physiological and healthy function, and constitutes an important link in the physical and moral perfection of woman.

All the lesions that may be developed during the continuance of this great and holy function—such as lesions of digestion; nausea, vomiting, pyrosis;—of respiration; dyspnoea, cough, palpitation;—of the circulation, varices, plethora, chlorosis, &c.;—of the secretions and excretions, ptyalism, albuminuria, dropsy, &c.;—of locomotion, relaxation in the articulation of the pubes, &c.;—and of the innervation, as derangements of the sensorial, intellectual or affectional faculties;—all, all these are perfectly amenable to pure Homœopathic treatment.

Gentlemen, we win laurels here of the most exalted kind; for it is when we have been faithful to our charge that gestation is accomplished in the most perfect manner, and the trying seasons of accouchment and lying-in rendered easy and safe to mother and child.

Again, the pregnant state often affords the most favorable and sometimes the only opportunity for the cure of chronic

maladies,—such as diseases of the heart, tuberculosis, scrofulosis, hepatitis, uterine displacements, &c. By commencing the treatment at the very beginning of the first pregnancy, and faithfully continuing it during those which succeed, a progressive improvement may be secured until health is completely established. While, at the same time, the offspring will improve in a corresponding manner, until finally they will cease to inherit the original diseases of the mother. If the husband be laboring under any chronic malady, it is equally important—absolutely necessary, in fact—that he should be carefully treated, in order that the offspring may not inherit his complaint. In many cases the life of the embryo, and even of the child itself after birth, will depend upon such precaution.

One more point remains to be considered, and this one relates to the *Climacteric period*, which completes the perfect triune in the noble development of woman,—the first period being that of Puberty, or womanly development; the second, that of Maternity; the third, the Climacteric.

As her Pubic and Maternal developments have been made comfortable, so should the Climacteric period. For our remedies are equally as efficacious in controlling the disturbances which may arise here, as in the instances already mentioned. Sometimes it happens that this period affords an opportunity for the development of some latent dyscrasia which could not appear before; thus at the same time is presented the opportunity for its removal by the properly selected specific remedy.

Thus finally appears the true woman; made perfect through much experience. She has passed through all the trials of life, and has thus become capable of aiding, encouraging and consoling her younger female friends,—at the same time that she herself calmly awaits her own removal to a renewed and still higher life in the future world.

It remains for me to state, gentlemen, as briefly as possible, the method I shall pursue in presenting the various themes

comprised in my course of lectures on Obstetrics and the Diseases of Women and Children.

The course is properly one; and I shall strive so to blend the whole as to render it as completely one as possible. Too often, this all-important branch of medical science is divided—a long and tedious course being given on Obstetrics, while the Diseases of Women and Children are hurried over, or scarcely considered at all, for want of time.

Throughout the entire course, in all its various departments, I propose to place side by side the normal and the abnormal, the healthy and the diseased conditions, so that the contrast shall be striking, the nature of each particular case shall be more clearly understood, and a more lasting impression made upon the mind of the student; while at the same time the means and the remedies to be employed in each particular case will be explicitly pointed out.

Can we properly understand the diseased conditions before becoming acquainted with the natural and healthy? Are they not at once more striking and more easily understood, when thus placed side by side and compared? And when can the means of remedy be more appropriately pointed out than when the morbid conditions themselves have just been described? In this way, by avoiding repetition, as well of descriptions as of demonstrations, much valuable time will be saved. And I trust that, at the close of this course, nothing of what is known at the present day in this department of medical study will have been omitted, which may be necessary to render you eminently proficient as accoucheurs and as physicians.

And now, gentlemen, do you fully realize the importance of this branch of our profession? Do you recognize its intimate connection with the highest and holiest of all human relations,—the bond of marriage between man and woman, and its important bearing upon that great central relation, upon which all others depend and from which they spring? Marriage is ordained of God, in creation, for the procreation of the human race. Father, mother, child, constitute the

grand trine of every perfect form of humanity. What is a man without his wife? What is a woman without her husband? What are husband and wife without their child?

Upon the more or less perfect condition of this trine, rests the whole fabric of human society; and in its true and orderly relations and results are the sources of human joy and progress. By Divine appointment, marriage and the pro-creation of children are intended to bring happiness to the human race, and to originate and develope true social order and well-being. The unhappiness and misery, the disorders and evils, which, in our experience, accompany it, and overflow the earth, are, in contravention of God's purpose, introduced by the perverse and evil wills and desires of men, acting in that freedom which is a necessary constituent of their humanity. To aid in ameliorating these evils and disorders, to help in the work of human reformation and restoration to a true condition and into right relations with the Divine order; to assist in the preservation of human health and vigor, as a basis on which the Truth can operate through sound, healthy and vigorous minds,—these are the high and sacred duties of the physician. Are not these incentives sufficient to draw forth all his energies, to call into action all his powers, and to make the devotion of his life to his use a labor of love?

Gentlemen, let us learn and labor to do our part of good to our fellow beings, even as the Lord, who has made and preserves us, does infinite good to us and to all men.